



The Honorable Judy Emmons, Chair
Senate Families, Seniors and Human Services Committee
PO Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Senator Emmons:

Min Waban Dan

**Administrative
Office**

523 Ashmun Street
Sault Ste. Marie
Michigan
49783

Phone

906.635.6050

Fax

906-635.4969

**Government
Services**

**Membership
Services**

On behalf of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, I want to applaud you for introducing Senate Bill 1232, the Michigan Indian Child Welfare Act (MIFPA). Your leadership and approach in scheduling a committee hearing and the ultimate vote on this legislative issue represents a commitment that is much appreciated.

The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians believes that there have been continuing inconsistencies in the application of that the Federal Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA) in the State of Michigan since the passage of the act in 1978. These inconsistencies jeopardize the integrity and continued existence of our Tribe. The passage of an appropriate state law will help clarify and heighten awareness in the State of Michigan and increase compliance with a Federal law.

The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians strongly supports the passage of a bill into state law to increase compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act within the state and to better protect our Tribe's interest in promoting the health and welfare of our children. There is no resource more vital to the continued existence and integrity of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians than our children.

However, we also recognize the concerns that the Bay Mills Indian Community has expressed with the current proposed bill, Senate Bill 1232. It is our opinion that the issues are real and we recommend continued discussions to develop appropriate amendments that will address and clarify Child Custody and Active Efforts definitions.

With that being said, we have come too far in a very long process to stop this initiative that has broad support and was done in the spirit of cooperation between the Tribe and the State of Michigan.

Again, thank you for introducing Senate Bill 1232. The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians looks forward to working with you on its successful passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aaron A. Payment".

Aaron A. Payment
Chairperson

CC: Vice Chairwoman Tory Rocca
Senator Mike Nofs
Minority Vice Chair Vince Gregory
Senator Tom Casperson
Senator Howard Walker